

Scene 1

The glow of monitors bathed the room in a sickly blue, each screen a window into lives picked apart like carcasses. Agent Rami leaned back, the leather chair creaking as his fingers danced over the keyboard. A Finnish girl's Instagram feed flickered—sunlit selfies, a dog, a Bible app blinking in her notifications. His cursor hovered, then pounced, injecting spyware into her phone with the precision of a scalpel.

“That body is fucking perfect.”

He didn't blink as he forwarded the data to his supervisor, subject line: P1 Candidate? The reply came swift, sterile: “Approved.”

Across the room, the new trainee shifted, eyes darting between feeds. Rami noted the tension in his shoulders—still green, still flinchable.

“When the family's out,” Rami said, lighting a cigarette, “we plant cameras. Bedrooms, bathrooms. Small revenue stream.” He exhaled a plume of smoke, watching it curl toward the ceiling. “The real payout's when we mold her into a asset. Mossad, CIA—they pay top dollar for clean merchandise. Might need to... clear her parents first. Simplify the variables.”

The trainee's throat bobbed. “Sir—her Bible app. She's reading Psalms.”

Rami smirked. “We'll rehabilitate her. Introduce her to friends. The kind who trade scripture for syringes.”

A flicker on another feed: a grainy bedroom, a blonde boy swaying from a ceiling beam. The trainee froze. “What's that?”

“Sacrifice.” Rami didn't glance up. “Client request. Our psych ops team spent months gaslighting him. Good ROI.” He tapped ash into a tray. “Kid's family's been crying on Facebook. Tragic.”

The trainee's cursor trembled over a thumbnail labeled R4/12 Streams. “And these...?”

“A growth market.” Rami's smile was thin. “Elites pay six figures to watch specific horrors. Blonde children, foreign assailants. Why d'you think we've boosted immigration stats?” He chuckled, cold. “Supply and demand.”

Silence pooled, thick and electric. The trainee stared at the boy's limp silhouette, then the girl's Bible app—still open, still glowing.

Rami stubbed out his cigarette. “You'll get used to it. Or you'll break.”

The screens hummed, endless, hungry.

Scene 2

The air smelled of antiseptic and burnt circuitry. Fluorescent lights buzzed overhead, illuminating a labyrinth of glass-walled chambers. Technicians in hazmat suits moved like ghosts between workstations, their gloves handling syringes, circuit boards, and vape pens stamped with cartoonish

logos. Rami led the trainee past a row of caged mice, their twitching bodies monitored by screens graphing dopamine spikes.

“Project Orpheus,” Rami said, tapping a glass case filled with neon vape cartridges. “Nicotine laced with hypnotics. Schoolkids love the mango flavor.” He picked up a pen, rolling it between his fingers. “Two puffs, and they’ll confess anything. Even things that never happened.”

A monitor flickered nearby, displaying the Finnish girl’s younger brother—pale, acne-scarred, hunched over his laptop in a dim bedroom. His fingers trembled as he typed: “I wish they’d all die.”

“Phase one,” Rami murmured. “Once we gaslight him into setting the house fire, the sister’ll need a new family.” He smirked. “We’ll be her family.”

The trainee’s gaze drifted to a chamber where a psychologist in a face shield adjusted an algorithm. On her screen, Bible verses—“The Lord is my shepherd”—blended seamlessly into ISIS execution clips, then back to TikTok dances.

“Cognitive dissonance brews loyalty,” Rami said. “Break their reality, then sell them a new one. Cheaper than bullets, louder than bombs.”

Behind them, a printer whirled, spitting out shipping labels for vape pens bound for Helsinki schools. A technician peeled one off and slapped it on a box: EU YOUTH WELLNESS INITIATIVE.

The trainee paused at a shelf cluttered with plaques. One gleamed under the sterile light: “EU Humanitarian Innovation Grant, 2023 – Awarded for Outstanding Contributions to Child Welfare.”

Rami followed his stare. “Tax breaks require creativity,” he said, adjusting his gloves. “Now c’mon. We’ve got a fire to schedule.”

Somewhere, a mouse screamed.

Scene 3

The trainee’s new office was a windowless cube in the basement of a repurposed NATO bunker. A corkboard dominated one wall, plastered with photos of teenagers—school IDs, gym locker selfies, Snapchat screenshots. Red string connected them to locations: Helsinki Youth Center, Oslo Skate Park, Tallinn Ferry Terminal. Rami tossed a file on the desk, its cover stamped R4/12-Δ.

“Your graduation project,” he said, lighting a cigarette. “We need fresh inventory. Clients are bored of the same scripts.”

The trainee opened the file. Inside: profiles of three girls, 13–15, all blonde, all tagged with psych metrics—Low Resilience, Parental Neglect, Seeking Validation. A USB drive labeled Phase 1: Infection glinted beside them.

Rami leaned over his shoulder, pointing at the first girl. “Maja. Dad’s a drunk, mom’s on antidepressants. She posts poetry about wanting to ‘disappear.’ Perfect.” He tapped the USB. “Use this malware to hijack her Discord. We’ll pose as a ‘friend’ recommending a party. Then...” He mimed a needle prick.

The trainee frowned. “And the immigrants?”

“Ah, right.” Rami pulled up a map of Stockholm, clusters of red dots near migrant housing. “Our contractors there—Syrians, Afghans—get €10k per job. Tell them the girls are far-right bullies. Easy sell.” He smirked. “Filming starts once the Rohypnol hits. Clients want... authenticity.”

A screen flickered on the desk, showing a live feed: the Finnish girl from Scene 1, now hollow-eyed, shuffling through a dormitory lined with bunk beds. A man’s voice off-camera barked, “Smile, or no meth tonight.”

“Your predecessor handled her,” Rami said. “Took six weeks to break her. Yours should be faster.”

The trainee hesitated, fingers hovering over Maja’s photo. “What if they report it?”

Rami snorted. “We are the report.” He pulled up a police database, flashing a badge icon over Maja’s file—MARKED: LOW CREDIBILITY. “Child Services, too. Our NGO partners tag them as ‘habitual liars’ if they squawk.” He dropped a burner phone on the desk. “First target’s in 72 hours. Coordinates sent at 0400. Oh, and—” He tossed a silver ring, its crest a snake eating its tail. “Wear this during streams. Clients fetishize the logo.”

As Rami left, the trainee stared at the ring. On the feed, the Finnish girl scratched at her arms, whispering Psalm 23.

Scene 4

The quarry walls glowed bone-white under industrial floodlights, their jagged edges framing a stage draped in blood-red velvet. Masked figures in tailored suits and gowns sipped Veuve Clicquot from crystal flutes, their laughter sharp as the Baltic wind. At center stage, a boy knelt—R4/12-Δ-09, 15 years old, shivering in a torn hockey jersey, his wrists bound with zip ties. A holographic screen above him tallied bids in real time: ¥142,000,000 – Dubai: “Make him beg in Arabic.”

Rami gripped the trainee’s shoulder, steering him toward the spotlight. “Time to graduate,” he purred, pressing a cattle prod into his hand. The trainee’s eyes flickered to the boy’s face—pale, freckled, one eye swollen shut. Finnish. Like the girl’s brother.

“Do it,” Rami whispered. “Or you’ll be next season’s opener.”

The trainee stepped forward. The prod hummed. The boy flinched, mumbling through split lips: “Äiti, auta...”

Zap.

The boy screamed. The crowd cheered. A woman in a feathered mask clapped, her diamond bracelet catching the light.

“Again,” Rami hissed.

Zap.

Muscles spasmed. The boy collapsed, urine darkening his jeans. The trainee's breath hitched—this isn't me, this isn't me—but his hand moved mechanically now, prodding, shocking, until the boy's whimpers dissolved into choked silence.

"Now the finale," Rami said, tossing him a knife.

The trainee hesitated. The blade glinted. The hologram updated: €5,000,000 – Zurich: "Cut his throat slow."

He knelt. The boy's breath hit his cheek, sour with fear. "Please," he gasped. "I have a sister—"

The trainee slit his throat.

Blood arced, painting the velvet. The crowd erupted—applause, moans, the wet crunch of someone biting into a rare steak. A screen flashed: BUYER SATISFACTION: 98.7%.

Rami draped an arm around the trainee, reeking of cigar smoke and Dior. "Welcome to the family." He slid a platinum card into his breast pocket. "Your cut. Spend it on something fun."

As the trainee staggered to the parking lot, his phone buzzed. A notification: P1-34 (Finnish Girl) – 3:22am Stream – 12,887 Viewers. He leaned against a Mercedes and vomited. Above him, a billboard glowed: PROTECT OUR CHILDREN – VOTE NATIONAL COALITION.

A hand touched his back. The feathered-mask woman, her breath sweet with champagne. "You were magnificent," she murmured, slipping a hotel key into his palm. "Room 1408. Bring the knife."

He stared at the key. The boy's blood crusted under his nails.

Somewhere, a wolf howled. Or maybe it was just the wind.

Scene 5 — Option 3: "The Algorithm's Edge"

The lab smelled of sterilized air and burnt silicon. Floor-to-ceiling servers throbbed with green LED pulses, their hum syncopated like a mechanized heartbeat. Rami led the trainee past rows of data engineers—hoodied, caffeine-eyed—their screens flashing mosaics of children's faces, each tagged with metrics: Despair Score, Exploitability Index, Market Value.

"Meet Cerberus," Rami said, gesturing to a monolithic screen where an AI model devoured social media feeds—TikTok dances, Snapchat streaks, prayer apps. "Scrapes 500k profiles an hour. Flags the vulnerable." He zoomed in on a Danish boy's Instagram: Self-harm memes, father deceased, 92% compliance likelihood. "Old ops took weeks. Now? Cerberus drafts the scripts, hires the actors, even picks the murder weapons."

A notification chimed. The trainee watched as Cerberus auto-generated a PDF: R4/12-Δ-14

- Target: Lina, 14, Stockholm
- Method: Fentanyl-laced vape pen (mango flavor)
- Narrative: "Overdose staged as suicide; link to immigrant dealers."
- Profit Estimate: €1.3M

"Elegant, no?" Rami smirked. "It learned from your work."

The trainee's throat tightened. On another screen, headlines blared: TEEN'S SUICIDE NOTE GOES VIRAL: "EUROPE FAILED ME". It was the Finnish girl's brother, his face pixelated under a trending hashtag. Cerberus had already repurposed his death—editing his note into far-right manifestos and TikTok sympathy edits.

"Watch this," Rami said, pulling up a live feed. In a Marseille slum, a North African teen received a text: "€10k if you stab the blonde girl at 3pm." The trainee recognized the girl from Cerberus' queue—P1-42, tagged High Purity.

"Cerberus sourced the contractor, too. Migrant with a sick mom. Efficiency."

A engineer called Rami over, pointing to a glitch: the AI had begun flagging politicians' children. "Bug?"

"Feature," Rami said. "Blackmail's 300% more profitable than streams."

That night, the trainee received a Cerberus alert. He clicked, expecting another target.

ASSIGNMENT: R4/12-Δ-21

- Name: Elina, 13
- Relation: Niece (paternal)
- Risk Profile: "Shares poetry blog with target Maja (R4/12-Δ-04). 89% suggestibility."
- Recommended Action: "Stage drowning during family lakeside vacation. Father's life insurance policy attached."

The trainee's coffee cup trembled. A family photo flashed on-screen—Elina grinning in a sundress, him beside her at last summer's reunion. Cerberus had already drafted the script: "Grief-stricken uncle joins EU task force on child safety."

Rami's message pinged: "First AI-designed op! Congrats. Decline allowed (but see Appendix B)."

Appendix B: A live feed of the trainee's apartment, his girlfriend sleeping, Cerberus' cursor hovering over her face.

SYSTEM ALERT: "Compliance ensures bidder satisfaction."